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The Last Salute and Other Poems

By Cassius M. Roberts *///*



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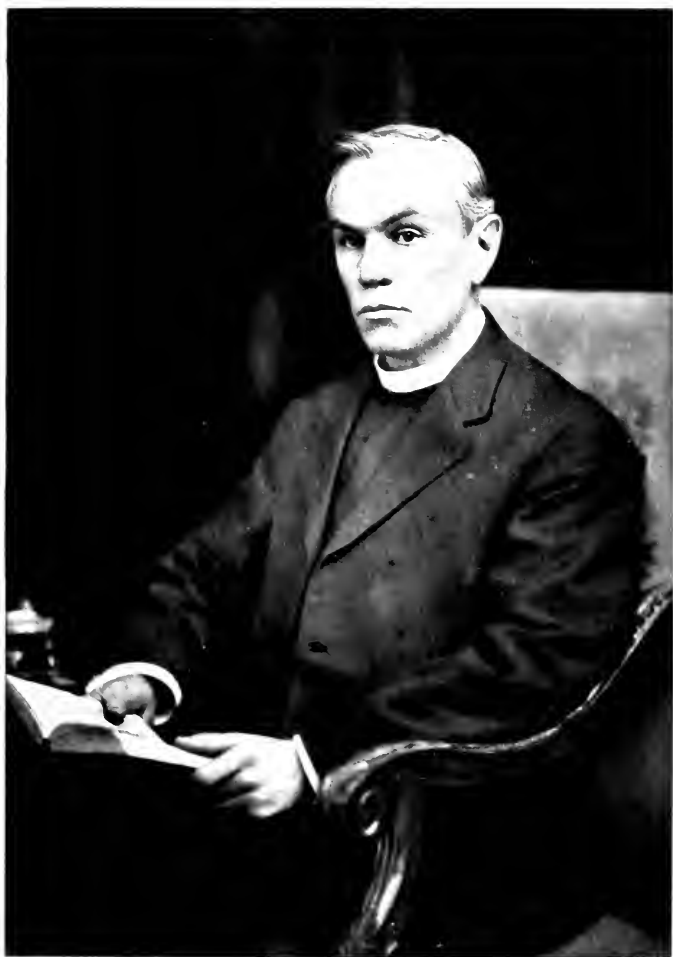


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THE LAST SALUTE AND OTHER POEMS

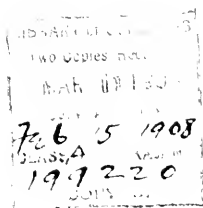
BY THE

REVEREND CASSIUS MARCUS ROBERTS, A.M.

PHILADELPHIA

THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY

1908



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by
L. M. ROBERTS



TO HIS MANY FRIENDS BOTH EAST AND WEST
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED
BY
HIS WIFE

It requires much faith to print a book of poems—
It requires more to send the book to one's friends.
I pray you judge me leniently for the first,
And kindly for the second—
For faith is the brother of hope
And the child of love,
And these three abide forever.

The Author.

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THE LAST SALUTE

TO W. B. B.

June, 1907

We never have run about the braes
Nor pulled the gowans fine,
But we fought the devil of modern days,
And we led our battle line.

We broke the bread and we blessed the cup,
And prayed and preached and sang;
Together we held the Lord Christ up
Where the conflict fiercest rang.

And ever as His battalions trod
The way they would not yield,
We held it best if the peace of God
Brought death on the battlefield.

O comrade, I, for the brave, brave fight,
Salute your honor high,
Who never turned for an instant's flight,
Nor saw with a coward's eye.

My hand in faith and my heart in love,
And ever my prayer anew,
That you strike once more for God above,
And that I may strike with you.

October, 1907

In vain I wait to hear thy tread
Come softly down the aisle,
They tell me thou art gone ahead
And I must wait awhile.

And when I longing look to see
What I shall see no more,
How can I walk alone where we
Together walked before?

Dear hand, that held the Spirit's blade
And Cross before mine eyes,
Dear heart, that gave mine accolade —
“Soldier, in Christ arise!”

How can I strike for God — alone —
Where fell thy sword arm low,
When all my spirit caught the tone
And rhythm of thy blow?

O father, brother, guide and friend,
O comrade, true and tried,
Pray God for me that at the end
I die as thou hast died.

NOTE:—The second part of *The Last Salute* written after the death of Dr. Bodine was the author's last finished poem.

THE CRY OF THE SOUL

God, I am weary and my quest
Is now for rest, Lord, only rest;
I lift my heart from thronging griefs
Through ranging highlands of beliefs.

I see the sin, I see the death,
I know the curse in human breath,
I feel the misery of woe;
My soul is low, Lord, very low.

With captain and with captain's clan,
I fight and struggle as I can,
Yet still the mighty hold the seat
And I know little but defeat.

Strong seems the wrong and weak the right,
And few there be that faithful fight;
Thy heaven is far, the world is near,
And faith prostrates itself to fear.

We need Thee, Lord; more than Thy grace
We need to look upon Thy face;
We need to know Thee close at hand
That we, when beaten, still may stand.

Weak man I am and where I come
The wicked mock and I am dumb;
God, I am weary and my quest
Is now for rest, Lord, only rest.

TO AN UNCAGED BIRD

A weary bird within a cage,
 Faintly, O Lord, he sings to Thee
 One little quavering note,
 The melody of rote,
 Instead of that full-throated minstrelsy
Which burneth in his heart, a noble rage
That nothing can assuage
 Save hills and forests broad, where he
 Can flit from tree to tree
 Like the free spirit of a pure democracy.

There filleth he the listening earth
 With freedom's sweetest challenge high,
 And splendidly are rolled
 His bars of liquid gold
 Up the long arches of the templed sky.
Oh thou, interpreter by right of birth
Of nature's holy mirth,
 Thou Levite of the woodlands, fly,
 And, as thou passest by,
 Sing, for thy dumb jailor hath nothing but a cry.

Thou sacred child of air and light;
 The forest that around thee rings
 Still unto thee belongs,
 With all its wondrous songs:
 Thy title to it is thine outstretched wings.
Soul of th' unbought wilderness, thy brave flight,
On my enraptured sight,
 Fair visions of my dreamland, flings
 The grace of all free things,
 And in thine untaught song, my uncaged spirit sings.

A SUMMER EVENING ON THE SOUND AT LOW TIDE

The lonely clammer leaves the bar
Where all the day he plied his trade,
As o'er the meadows, dim and far,
The lights of evening flash and fade.

The ceaseless tides that through the deep
Forever roll their weight along,
Here gently thrill as though asleep
And rippling sing their rhythmic song.

A single sea-gull swiftly speeds
On eager wings towards the sea;
A marsh-hen cackles in the reeds,
And somehow peace has come to me.

A strange sweet stillness settles down,
That is not silence to the soul;
As when from some far distant town
We hear the bells at evening toll.

And on the low horizon's rim
The rising clouds are slow uncurled,
Till mountain masses, black and grim,
Seem building walls around the world.

And in this vast cathedral calm,
Of earth and sky and sea and air,
Where every sound is like a psalm,
And all the silence like a prayer;

Oh minster towers, how dim ye seem!
Oh calling bells, how far from here!
In this sweet peace I scarce can dream
Of men that sin and curse and fear.

And so I listen to the waves
That lightly lap along the shore,
And hear no note of storm that raves,
Nor echo from the tempest's roar.

Far from the world with all its care;
Far from follies and its fears;
There yet is something in the air
That's strangely near akin to tears.

Those tears that mingle with our blood,
And flow when hearts are overfull;
For melancholy marks the good,
And sadness all the beautiful.

Volcanic soul, whose nether fires
Still fiercely burn along thy veins,
Thou willful child of strong desires,
Stand still awhile where heaven reigns.

Some oversoul of sweet release;
Some shadowy but Almighty hand,
Is blending thee with all the peace
That falls across this meadow-land.

"For it is God that worketh in you."—ST. PAUL.
"Love moves the sun and the other stars."—DANTE.

PART ONE

The flattering day had soothed my pride
 With triumphs over trifling things;
I walked the earth half deified,
 And Folly measured me with kings.

When, lo! I looked into the night;
 I saw the heavens and heard the sea;
And, somehow, at the awful sight,
 I withered in immensity.

What art thou, man? Lord of the sphere,
 The lightnings in thy countenance?
Or but the child of nameless Fear
 And tangled mystery of Chance?

Oh, reader, as an open page
 The changeful moods of day and night!
Oh, watcher, on th' eternal stage
 The drama of the infinite!

Stand still, O soul, and hear the voice
 Forever old, forever new;
Stand still, O soul, hear and rejoice
 And read the riddle that is you.

PART TWO

Last night the moon was large and red
And crimson as a warrior's shield;
As though a million men had bled
On some vast lunar battlefield.

The sea beneath her heaved and tossed
And moaned as one in mortal pain;
And, like the spirits of the lost,
The winds caught up the sad refrain.

They told it to each list'ning star,
For, one by one, they drooped and paled,
Till o'er the heavens, dim and far,
They moved like mourners, deeply veiled.

To-night the moon is bright and fair,
Bathing the world in liquid light;
The sea is calm, the lilting air
Is sensuous with pure delight.

And not a cloud obscures the sky;
No tremor shakes the golden-rod;
A myriad stars flame out on high
Like candles round the throne of God.

PART THREE

Oh heart of man that sobs or sings,
Oh soul with power to bless and curse,
That subtle sympathy of things
Which grandly tunes the universe,

That harmony which moves upon
The chaos of the spatial throng,
Is but the outer antiphon
Responding to the inner song.

Hark then! the voice of prophecy
Which calls thee even from the dust;
Thy universe is God and thee,
And all its message — love and trust.

And sun and moon and stars and sea
Shall be the vassals of thy will,
And deep as God's eternity
Shall run His word — Rise and fulfill.

A SUMMER MORNING

The last star flings its glittering lance
Against the helm of dawn,
A million golden splinters dance
About the dewy lawn.

Before the heralds of the day
The fleeing shadows go,
Far up the hills they troop away
With banners trailing low.

Look thou, my love, into the skies
Where morning's splendors shine,
That see I, Love, in thy dear eyes,
That thou shouldst see in mine.

AN EASTER VISION

There's something mystic in the morn,—
A wondrous grace of modest hesitation,—
As when the woman, newly born,
Awakens from her maiden meditation,
And, lifting unaccustomed eyes
Upon a wholly new and strange creation,
She watches with a sad surprise
While all her old world slowly dies
And her assurance turns to consternation.

How blessed then the yesterdays
That clasp the priceless gems of her affection,
And, in her soul's complete amaze,
Still binds her in unbreakable connection
With all the memories of things
That were to her a changeless benediction;
And faith, amidst the ruinings
Of faith, still keeps her deathless kings,
And contradicts the sternest contradiction.

So, trembling in the fearful gloom,
Came Mary hasting that first Easter morning;
She brought some spice and sweet perfume,—
Her woman's treasure for her own adorning.
But ah, her faithful heart had brought
What little dreamed she was her finer treasure,
That thing which only God hath wrought,
That thing the raptured saints have sought,
And faith perceives in death — life's vaster measure.

There is a life that's only death,
 A breathing chaos, cursing with affliction;
There is a life that's more than death,
 And triumphs over every crucifixion;
And Mary, Mary's soul above
 Saw realms beyond the realms of death's disaster;
She heard the voice of perfect love,
And, like a lonely homing dove,
 Fled to Him crying out, "Rabboni," Master.

There is in every little seed
 That dares to lift its heart toward things sidereal,
What laws of nature cannot breed,—
 What does not slumber in the mere material;
For life is ever more than bread;
 We heed nor hear the voice of desolation;
And o'er the graves of millions dead
We lift a fearless shining head,
 And sing of everlasting consolation.

THE OCEAN'S SHORE

That narrow shifting line between the sand and sea,
That place where land and water meet —
The Ocean's shore —
I've seen again and heard its voice — great Nature's voice
That's never stilled nor changed nor falsified
From the far morning of this world's day.

No man hath ever writ upon that line, "I'm master here,"
But a few ripples from the soundless deep hath rolled above
And left it all as smooth and clean as the untouched sky.
Here undisputed Nature speaks her sovereign will, and here this
 mad world
Comes to hear, and mayhap touch her floating robe
And, from its healing hem, find its sweet sanity again.

There is a holy and a ghostly power untrammelled Nature ever
 has
To so hold the mirror of her faultless truth to each man's face,
That he shall see the deeps divinely set within himself,
And be himself and glory in himself for what he is.
Why, 'tis a place where fools seem called to babble folly,
And 'tis a place where silent sages stand and humbly wait
To hear in soothing harmonies the voice of God.

O man, that standest idly where the land and water meet,
Behold th' unanswering shore that's patient still through ever-
 lasting blows,
And then the shouting sea, courageous still through everlasting
 toil,
And 'twixt these two a contest glorious that ends not nor abates
 forever.

And thinkest thou Omnipotence is running to thy feet these
leaping waves
For nothing but to beat their noisy fury into silence here
Upon this senseless and this unresisting sand? I tell thee now
That God is holding up the mirror to thine own face:
Here thy dull ears are hearing full within thy solitary world
Thine own imperial *must* and slavish *cannot* at a breath;
And here the fluid freedom of thy future cries, to thy unheed-
ing soul,
Its bitter protest at the stony bondage of thy present to thy
dead past.

O 'tis a joy fit for a god to know such deeps and heights of
power
Within ourselves, that we may fearless front the problems of
our universe;
But 'tis a grief that beggars words to feel the fear that dares
not;
To hear within our souls the cry of chaos for the king's law
And never dare to answer like a king.

The shore, eternally defiant, stands in moanless silence
'Neath the everlasting blows of Ocean's wrath and answers not
Through all a million years of changeless contest:
And the sea, ever gathering up her broken and retreating
columns
To hurl them all afresh upon her ancient enemy with shouts
Of thunderous protest that abates nor changes not with time,
Neither conquering nor conquered — an elemental and, at times,
Infuriate war would crush the iron navies of the earth like
rotted straw.

What means this riddle that outreaches time — this truceless
conflict —

But that, betwixt the sullen shore's, "I will not," and the
Ocean's stern, "I will,"

God grinds the stuff with which He builds in beauty and in
glory

This solid and majestic world?

And yet I've seen a peace so gentle and so kind

Upon that line that helpless babes might play there,

And the long waves, that rolled from out the mighty deep

And flung themselves upon the shore in endless crashings,

But seemed to cradle in the Eternal's calm my tired soul.

WELCOME — FOR A HOUSE

*Friendship is that holy estate into which none can enter
save only the elect of God.*

This house that's mine is also thine,
O friend that comes to tarry here;
All welcomes greet thy ent'ring feet,
And ev'ry comfort of good cheer.

May all the wealth of gracious health
Still, still be thine through length of days;
And not a fear and not a tear,
And God to keep thee young always.

Bring peace of mind and thou shalt find
A welcome here that never ends;
Within these walls and narrow halls
There's hearth and home for all our friends.

Joy unconfined shall draw the blind
And lure old Time to stop and nod;
Our fire alight shuts out the night,
Come in and leave the world to God.

HYMN

FOR THE CONSECRATION OF A CHURCH

House of the living God;
Enriched by praise and prayer;
Here, Lord, we bend beneath Thy rod,
Believing in Thy care.
Make this Thy temple stand
While mortal hearts still bleed;
A mighty rock in a weary land
And refuge in our need.

Within these hallowed walls
And spacious aisles between,
Grant, Lord, to whomsoever calls
Thy glory may be seen.
Here may the sinner turn;
The troubled find Thy peace;
Thy lamp of love forever burn
And ever more increase.

Here lift the souls that grieve;
And stop the tears that flow;
And teach Thy people to believe
What saints and angels know.
And grant each contrite heart
And broken be refreshed;
Till every sorrow shall depart
Through Thee, O Christ, confessed.

Here, Lord, Thine altars raise,
And pour Thy waters blest,
Till heaven and earth shall sing Thy praise
And all the weary rest.
Still for the battles' strife
Our courage, Lord, renew ;
Lift up the gates of heavenly life
And let the King come through.
Amen.

Sung at the Consecration of the Church of the Saviour,
November 20th, 1906.

A PRAYER

O God, these myriads, unelect,
Who seethe and sour in bitter talk,
Who crawl and grovel, unrect,
And never rise and never walk;

To whom the earth, with all its wealth,
Is but a carcass where to feed;
And every sweet impulse of health
Is cursed by the laws of greed;

Whose lives are like the clouded sea,
Where every sail is reefed and still,
And arching their eternity
Seems nothing but a sullen will;

Where all the waves that by them roll
But sweep their unresisting decks,
And not a wind from pole to pole
But beats them into heavier wrecks;

Who feel no pains save those that hurt,
Who only know to curse and grope,
These dead that live — these poor inert —
Without a star of faith or hope;

Lord, wake for them some mighty seer,
Some prophet with a living tongue,
Whose life shall be the atmosphere
Of deeds and worlds forever young.

Serene amidst the storms that roll,
So let him stand that these may see,
And show to every troubled soul,
That man's the only mystery;

That God and man are only one,
And death and hell but seem to be,
Through every darkness shines Thy Sun,
And time is Thy eternity.

TO A MOONLESS NIGHT

How beautiful is night,
When, with the light,
The common things of day
Have passed away.

I love the somber dark
That clothes a stark
Old Nature's war-worn face
With holy grace.

The comedies in dust,
Of fear and lust;
All vanish from the sight
Before the night.

'Away beyond the clouds
The world enshrouds,
When nothing earthly mars
The flaming stars,

My soul takes freedom's wings
And, soaring, sings;
No sun, no moon, no earth,
No death, no birth,

No ghostly fears to loom
Out of the gloom,
In all the Universe
Never a curse.

The domed and templed skies,
Before my eyes,
And all the Infinite
Where God is light.

A SPRING MORNING

The gusty wind blows from the sea,
The clouds swing high above,
A meadow-lark sings on the lea
His song of brooding love.

The shading light, through grassy fields,
Runs like a soft caress,
As when a maiden bends and yields
To love that comes to bless.

O morning time in mooding time,
When souls together sweep;
O morning time in brooding time,
When only love is deep;

When kindness does not know 'tis kind,
For wounds are not yet sore;
With Eden but a step behind
And all the world before —

Sing, soul of youth, thy heart is strong,
Thy blood is full of fire;
Sing out, O Soul, thy wonder song,
The song of thy desire.

The raptures of the waking day
Prophetic round thee roll,
Thy feet are eager for the way
And songs are in thy soul.

Thy foes have never yet been born,
Thy battles not conceived;
And half thy hope is in the scorn
Of faith still undeceived.

For age to thee is Folly's fee,
And weakness only sin,
And all thy future, wild and free,
Is thine to conquer in.

Let evening come with Mercy's cry
Before oblivious night,
Around is the expanding sky,
And life is all delight.

A BROKEN FLOWER

*I saw a flower lift up its head,
In crimson glory full outspread,
It caught the rains the heavens shed;
It broke and fell, and lo, 'twas dead.*

How passing strange a seed should be
A prison for life's prophecy;
How stranger far the rain should free
That life into this rhapsody —

This rhapsody of color fine,
And form that seems almost divine,
Outmatching rubies crystalline
'As water is outmatched by wine.

And yet the power that smote the cell
Till bars and gates before it fell,
Calling thenceforth with living spell
This flower as fair as asphodel,

Now smites without a sign of pain
This flower of life to death again;
In life, in death, without a stain;—
Are life and death both in the rain?

And is there something, then, of death
That pulses in the living breath?
And all our hopes, hath God thus saith:
“The grave is all life offereth”?

Strange, flower and man together cry
For blessings most supremely high;
And when they come, together lie,
Broken by fullness, wond'ring why.

I felt that wonder in me swell,
But, still believing all was well,
I stooped above the flower that fell —
A worm had done the deed of hell.

Hell? Be it worm or wind or rain,
'Twas hands of love the flower had slain,
Nor heard I hand or flower complain,
For Love and Life and Hope remain.

Still in the broken stem there grew
The power to bud and flower anew;
Still there the living might that drew
Love's blessings from the rain and dew.

Above the wreck that round it lay
Shone all the glory of the day;
And in the breezes cradling sway
Was power above the power to slay.

O Lord, I'm weak from arrow stings
The bow of my misfortune flings;
Yet wake in me th' ethereal springs
Of all divine imaginings,

Till I can bear with perfect glance
The splendor of Thy countenance;
Keep Thou Thy law around my chance,
Thy shadow o'er my circumstance.

SONNET
ON A SINGER'S TRIUMPH

Drunken with praise and pleasure, lo, she stands
And leans against the casement of the door ;
Her head, queenlike, high flung, as looking o'er
Some triumph that had brought her many lands
To rule, and now, at her supreme commands,
High fashion and fair beauty stop to pour,
As they have done a thousand times before,
Their homage free, enscapt'ring her weak hands.
The horses of Aurora might have felt
As she ; but not Aurora's self divine,
Who, speeding o'er the heavens, calmly knelt
And held with master hand the guiding line ;
Nor on the glory of her labors dwelt ; —
Her duty in the heavens was to shine.

DE PROFUNDIS

Through heavy clouds that roll above the city;
Now here, now there, obscuring house and street;
Men, weary-eyed, look up and curse your pity;
Out of the deeps where God and Mammon meet.

What are the clouds that roll above the city?
What are the clouds the winds blow not away?
Incense from them that troll the careless ditty,
And stop to prate but never stoop to pray.

Yonder they rise, the master in his palace
Buildeth an altar to a ribald god;
He is the priest that poureth in the chalice
Wine from the blood where Honour's feet have trod.

Dim through that haze, I see poor women's faces,
Mute as the beasts that only look their wrong;
Out of young hearts where God has throned the graces,
I hear a sob that ought to be a song.

Woe to the world when Honour's courage falters,
When honest toil shall ring no sacring bell;
Woe to the world when Labor rears no altars
To God in heaven, for then our god's in hell.

Out of the deeps men call upon their maker;
O Jesu, hear and answer them right soon
With help and hope, outside Thy waiting acre,
Ere hopeless night shall cover helpless noon.

THE SUPPLIANT, THE PRAYER AND THE ANSWER

The Suppliant:

Well groomed he came, with quiet air,
Into the church one Lenten day,
And, in its atmosphere of prayer,
He knelt and bowed his head to pray.

He closed his eyes to shut without
The world and all its sodden sin;
He needed not, for sodden doubt
Long since had shut his soul within.

Not doubt of Church, not doubt of creeds,
Nor hell so deep, nor heaven so high;
But doubt of any human needs,
Which God had called him to supply.

He saw the current of the years
Run red with wrong, nor heard the cry
Boom down the heavens for his ears:
“Rise, son of man, and prophesy.”

He knew the greed that tortures man
Nor raised his hand its curse to stay;
He deemed it all was heaven's plan,
And, calmly, he knelt down to pray.

The Prayer:

Have mercy on my soul, O Lord,
And speak to me Thy pard'ning word.
Forgive my sin and set me free,
That I may be at peace with Thee.
For I have longed to see Thy face
And feel Thy firm sustaining grace.
On bended knee, with streaming eyes,
My longing soul within me cries
That I'm not worthy to unlace
Thy very shoes, much less embrace
With sinful eyes, Thy figure meek;
Still, still I pray that Thou wouldst speak,
And let me see Thy blessed face,
And feel Thy firm sustaining grace.

The Answer:

It is not words, it is not cries,
Nor bended knee, nor streaming eyes;
It is not groveling in thy grief
Shall bring thy soul a sweet relief.
I'll walk with thee when thou art meek;
When thou canst hear I'll freely speak.
Lo, I have stood before thy door
And begged for entrance o'er and o'er,
A thousand times thou'st heard My cry,
A thousand thou hast passed Me by.
Thou'lt see Me on the icy street
Where children walk with naked feet;
Thou'lt hear My voice and catch My tone
Where widows work and weep alone.
While thou hast watched with eager eyes
To see Me coming from the skies,
With all the poor without thy gate
I humbly stand and patient wait.
Where love and truth have suffered loss,
Lo, there I hang upon My cross;
Where faith hath wrought to set men free,
My riven tomb, look there and see;
Where right hath found a martyr friend,
There is the mount whence I ascend.
And cross and tomb and Olivet
Are waiting for thee, even yet.
These prayers of thine are idle words,
As actors play with guns and swords.
When thou shalt make thy actions pray,
Thy Lent shall have its Easter day,
And heaven and earth and ev'ry place
Shall speak My voice and show My face.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

The morn had hung her gauzy robe
Of light 'twixt night and day ;
Low in the west, the moon, a globe
Of polished silver, lay.

Like some fair spirit of delight
Or Venus from the sea ;
The world, half risen from the night,
Half hid in mystery.

The white clouds lay, a level zone,
On Nebo's mighty frame,
And o'er them Pisgah rose and shone,
An altar all aflame.

The fading shades, like ancient ghosts
Of curses grown afear'd,
Were sweeping past as all the hosts
Of army light appeared.

Life everywhere on wings of power
Was rising from the tomb ;
Life everywhere ! 'Twas like a flower
Fresh bursting into bloom.

No hurrying earthly voices broke
The waiting stillness calm,
But all the living silence spoke
And said : " O man, I AM."

“ I AM that rule the heaven and earth
And roll the season’s rhyme,
Forever bringing to rebirth
The age of evening time.

“ I build the mountain; tear its crust;
By Me its rocks are hurled;
I grind them into formless dust
And so rebuild the world.

“ I blow upon each living thing
And wither it in death;
I blow again and, lo, the Spring
Is in My quickening breath.

“ For I am God; and Nature still,
In every mood and grace,
Does more than manifest My will;
It hides or shows My face.

“ And is there Truth and is there Love
That live and cannot die?
O man, these things are from above,
O man, these things am I.

“ The resurrection and the life
Are in the night and morn;
The universe, in peace, in strife,
Proclaims the dead, the born.”

THE CHRISTMASTIDE

AN ECSTASY

Awake, my soul, awake and sing
The glory of the heavenly king;
The King that maketh wars to cease,
And bringeth peace, and bringeth peace.

The nations wait to hear His tread
For round Him wake the quick and dead;
And, in the darkness of their night,
He bringeth light, He bringeth light.

Lift up your heads, ye stricken men,
He bringeth faith and hope again;
And, from the heart of God above,
He bringeth Love, He bringeth Love.

Then wake, my soul, awake and sing,
And all your richest treasures bring;
For grace divine, salvation free,
He bringeth thee, He bringeth thee.

Ring out, ye bells, O ring away,
The Christ of God is born to-day;
The world is old, He makes it new;
O hallelu Jah, hallelu.

O hearts of men, awake and sing,
Let heaven and earth with praises ring;
Tell out again this Christmas morn
That Christ is born, that Christ is born.

A SONG OF THE NEW YEAR

The old year, the cold year,
Is numbered with the dead;
The new year, the true year,
Is stretching fair ahead.

Behind are all the miseries, before are all the joys;
My soul leaps up and runs away as fearless as a boy's.

But doubts come about some,
And serpents wake with spring;
And health dies and wealth flies,
And hearts forget to sing;

Lord Jesus, grant thy faith to us, thy loyalty of love;
That men may sing in all the earth as angels sing above.

The heavens rang when the angels sang
Their song on Judah's plain;
And near now we hear now
That heavenly song again;

Our eyes shall see that glory and our ears shall hear complete,
When hand in hand and heart to heart we walk with willing feet.

Then my hand for thy hand
And all our doubtings past;
And my heart for thy heart
And love to bind them fast;

With Christ above at God's right hand, the Spirit full and free,
Through ev'ry danger that may come, will still keep you and me.

KENYON ALUMNI HYMN

Dear Kenyon, queen of mothers,
Our memory's fondest shrine,
We hail thee here as brothers
And loyal sons of thine;
Beneath thine ancient roof-tree,
And in thy sacred walls,
Again, again, we hail thee
And ring it through thy halls.

REFRAIN.

Then heart to heart, my brother,
And here's my hand for you,
We hail thee, Kenyon, Mother,
And pledge thee here anew.

Thou liftest up thy steeple
High over hill and plain,
To call among the people,
"My sons, come home again!"
Our feet run far to meet thee,
Our hearts leap up to bless,
We stretch our hands to greet thee,
And touch thee to caress.

We join with long-gone pleasure
In songs we used to sing,
And, in the rolling measure,
Our winters turn to spring:

Dear Mother, though we've trodden
A long and weary way,
Our hearts are still unsodden,
And we are boys to-day.

God bless thee, Holy Mother,
And keep thee pure and true,
We love thee as none other,
And pledge thee here anew.
May all the breezes love thee,
And float thy banners high,
The heavens still shine above thee
Forever and for aye.

A SUMMER SUNSET ON THE COAST OF NEW JERSEY

How grandly doth the evening come,
And yet how soft its shadows fall;
No pageantry of trump and drum,
Nor cannon's crash nor herald's call.

The sun sinks slowly to his rest,
In pearl and amber banks he sets,
While up the arches of the West
The fire-god flings his bannerets.

Up, up a height of clouds immense
They float in splendor o'er the skies,
Till consciousness, absorbed in sense,
Lives only in divine surprise.

Far called by kindred elements,
My answering spirit sweeps away
To airy, firelit continents
And islands of the fading day.

Embosomed in a lambent sea,
Where glory into glory dies,
Till all the West's a chancelric
For Nature's evening sacrifice.

Fair vision of the ever blest,
In thee her priestly powers conspire
To show the end of final rest,
And all that's noble in desire.

The choral beauty glowing there
Hid in the heart of common things,
With lordly hand she lays it bare,
And, lo, it most divinely sings.

It sings of the abysmal love,
That weaves the cosmos in its spell,
And, mirrored on the heavens above,
Confutes blind chaos and his hell.

With liturgies of voiceless trust
That from her humblest still aspires;
With offerings of mist and dust
Wind blown above her altar fires;

She, reverent, lifts the imperial gates
And lets her Prince's glory come;
The soul of things, immortal, waits,
And I wait with it — like it — dumb.

A RAINY DAY IN OCTOBER

All day the fretful winds have swept
In eddies overhead;
All day the low-hung clouds have wept
Like mourners for the dead.

The cricket hides within the wall
And sings no vesper song;
I only hear the raindrops fall,
And winds wail all day long.

I love the autumn time of year,
The deep October sky,
The bob-white's whistle, sharp and clear;
The whip-poor-will's sad cry.

I love the streams that steal along
By woodlands touched with brown,
The oak trees standing stark and strong,
The leaves that flutter down.

But, oh, these branches whipt and tossed,
These sodden leaves and dead
Are like the spirits of the lost
Who ope the gates of Dread.

Dread Mem'ry's gates wherein I go
With strange reluctance shod,
To meet twin spectres whom I know —
Myself — as brute and god.

And one is fierce and very strong;
And one is frail and fair;
And one roars out a battle song;
And one has only prayer.

In vain the frenzied strength, in vain
The brutal battle song;
The storms of life with wind and rain
Are stronger than the strong.

Let him who can sing hymns to youth
As man's most glorious prime;
For me 'tis ever age's truth
And manhood are sublime.

My bark is in the heavy mist
And sails to fairer day:
The winds of God blow where they list,
And I can only pray.

October's fields of golden grain,
October's garnered sheaves,
'Are still beyond the wind and rain
And heaps of sodden leaves.

TO TWO LITTLE MAIDENS

THE CHILDREN OF MRS. E. U. P.

Sweet sovereigns from another clime
Above this ruder realm of time,
We bend the knee to give to thee
The homage of our fealty.

Wider than our experience
The kingdom of thy innocence,
And through thy eyes we see arise
Fair empires of Love's high emprise.

We longing stoop to catch the bliss
That waits us in thy trusting kiss,
For thou art clean as the Unseen
And royaler than king or queen.

We wonder why ye strayed away
From gardens of the gods of day,
But bless the grace in each sweet face —
The light that lightens every place.

TO MISS R. McC.

For thee I pray that gentle ways
May still be thine through length of days;
That hope professed
May find its strength in faith confessed;
That riches true,
Thou child of love, may go with you;

That every truth,
And every grace
May shine, dear Ruth,
From thy sweet face.

For grief's surcease,
With heaven's own peace;
And then always
For God's good praise.
Amen.

TO A BUTTERFLY

O butterfly that swingest by,
Without a song, without a sigh,
Upon my sight thy dreamy flight
Flings only sensuous delight.

Thou flashest o'er the brook that sings
And stoopest where the thistle swings,
But crystal brook and thistle green
Are unto thee as the unseen.

Thou dost not wake, thou dost not sleep,
For nothing dost thou vigil keep;
Nor length nor breadth nor deep nor high
Are in thy heart or in thine eye.

What matters all thy gaudy coat,
Thy beauty matchless when afloat,
Thou mindless wanderer of the fields
That always takes and never yields?

With morning born, with evening dead,
A memory with ten thousand fled,
Thou dancest in the summer's light,
A little dance, and it is night.

Yet, vagrant from some fairy clime,
And harbinger of summer time,
Stretch wide thy wings thine every hour
And fold them over every flower.

Thy beauty and thy wondrous grace
But helps to hallow every place;
Thy thoughtlessness of coming doom
Still leaves to thee a world in bloom.

THE CONCERTINA PLAYER

I wondered from what foreign strand
Had come this alien to the race;
Nor Slav, nor Greek, nor Southron land
Had writ a message on his face.

His clothes were poor and worn and old,
His wrinkled cheeks were dark with grime,
And, slouching o'er the pavements cold,
He seemed of neither place nor time.

A concertina like himself
He held within his dirty hands,
And, idly, for a little pelf,
He played the tunes of many lands.

The western sun began to slant,
The crowd poured by in steady streams,
And heeded not this mendicant
Who moved as one that only dreams.

I heard him o'er and o'er begin,
And nothing held his fancy long,
'Twas now a bit of ancient hymn,
And now a snatch of comic song.

But suddenly, as to and fro
His lazy fingers touched the keys,
The nasal tones, now high, now low,
He hoped some idling ear would please,

Swept on into a nobler bar
For which the player had not planned,
And, lo, the mighty voice of war
Rang through a desolated land.

The street, the city and the crowd
Passed instant from my startled glance,
No more the slouching figure bowed,
But rose and stood, incarnate France.

As all the years of struggling truth
Beneath his fingers sang their pain,
Some spirit of immortal youth
Had set him with his own again.

I heard the voice of crazed alarms,
A people's who had been betrayed;
I heard the call of wrath to arms
For rights that would not be delayed.

I heard a nation's heavy groans;
I saw the streets with blood run red;
And then the rending crash of thrones
Where kings forget the right to bread.

Like one who from some organ brings
The martyr's voice of ancient praise;
So they who once had slaughtered kings
Came forth and sang the Marseillaise —

And I sang with them — all the ghosts
Who sang that song of war and death;

And I heard singing all the hosts
Who yet shall breathe the common breath.

The western sun was far aslant ;
The crowd ceased pouring by in streams ;
Still stood this lonely mendicant
And idly played as one that dreams.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

TWO VOICES

"I will mock when your fear cometh."

Stop, for a year lies dying;
Silence, a year is dead;
Fierce on the North-wind flying
Soundeth a voice of dread;
"I am the soul of your years,
Troubled and tempest-tossed;
I speak the voice of your fears
And moan for worlds you lost."

Icy the breath of midnight;
Cold the stars in the sky;
Ghostly the glare of moonlight
When the old-year must die;
Ghastly the forms that daunt me;
Pale hands flit over my brow;
Curses and prayers that haunt me
Mingle about me now.

E'en though a year be dying,
E'en though a year be dead,
Deathless the dead come crying,
Swathed in their mantles red:
"Graves for thy mem'ries? Never.
Tombs where thy sins can hide?
Ever more and forever
They in the world abide.

“ Gaunt, the spectre of famine
Walks the earth for thy greed;
Hunger itself shall examine
Deeds thou hast done that bleed;
Lust, that recks not of sorrow,
Shricks in thy maniac glee,
Cursing each man’s to-morrow
As long as men shall be.

“ Souls of immortal evil
Breathèd their life from thee,
While thy hand for the devil
Played with eternity.
Who, O man, shall deliver?
Where is he can release?
Ages to come shall shiver
To measure thy sin’s increase.”

“Behold I Make All Things New.”

Over the phantoms dismal
Crying for sin's surcease;
Out of the deeps abysmal
Cometh the voice of peace;
Cometh the **WORD** eternal:
“Sorrow alone hath sufficed;
I am the way supernal;
I am the living Christ.

“Trust, and thou shalt receive Me,
Even under the rod;
Love, and thou shalt conceive Me,
Fair as the will of God.
Lo, **I** am with thee alway;
Rise, **I** bid thee to stand;
Forward into the new day;
Fear not, **I** am at hand.”

Onward then, Christian, onward,
Courage upon thy brow;
Onward, O Christian, onward,
Christ is beside thee now.
Take the sword of the spirit;
Faith be thy flag unfurled;
Into thy future nor fear it,
God is King of the world.

IN RESPONSE TO A MESSAGE FROM W. G.

The Winter's snows are the winding sheet
Where Spring's sweet promise now lies dead;
And the flowers we seek with eager feet
We never grasp till the bloom has fled.

There's a Lure that paints our future fair
And the boy's heart leaps in noble rage;
But we only walk where the visions were
With the feeble steps of a palsied age.

Oh, reluctant hand of heartless Fate,
Whose only gift is an unshed tear,
Our hopes grow old, and they fruit too late
But Love is young at seventy year.

I ask not Time with his scythe and glass
For the earth beneath or sky above;
With Time they came and with Time they pass,
And I am rich if I have but Love.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, ON THE 94TH ANNIVERSARY
OF HIS BIRTH

He stood amidst the breaking waves
Of human passions, fierce and wild,
And knew the only strength that saves,
And used it simply as a child.

Uncouth, unpolished and unschooled,
Let sages learn from him again;
He knew the human heart and ruled
As one who loves his fellow man.

I see his mighty figure — dim
And misty through a nation's tears;
How beauteous are the feet of him —
The choicest of a thousand years.

“God give us men?” Nay, give us God
In men who do His high behest;
And walk in faith beneath the rod
Like him, this giant of the West.

Come, Langton and ye barons old —
And all ye heroes — from the gloom,
Come forth from death and dust and mold,
And lay your Charter on his tomb.

Ye saw a vision of free men,
And nobly dreamed with hand on sword;
His was the hand whose fearless pen
Completed the Eternal's word.

O people, called again to strive,
Break forth to singing for his birth;
The Lord is God, and He will drive
The shadows from this war-worn earth.

THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING

To be a bard and sing my song —
A prophet with a vision new —
To rise above the middle throng
And walk with heaven and earth in view ;

To see the things that none can see
Save only the anointed kings ;
To be the thing that none can be
Whose profit is in little things ;

To own the earth and sky with God ;
Dominion have on land and sea —
For this I'll bend beneath the rod
And kiss the hand that chastens me.

And when, through all life's agony,
My clouded vision has grown clear,
And mine's the changeless harmony
Of perfect faith without a fear,

Lord, send me forth to speak to them —
Thy children, kindred to the clods —
And set them in Thy diadem,
And make them brothers to the gods.

“ And yet I am not alone because the Father is with me ”

There is a faith that's writ in blood and tears,
And, though it knows the failures of the years,
Still rests on Providence and feels no fears.

There is a trust that never stands alone,
And, though it hears the whole world's bitter moan,
With cloudless eyes sees God upon His throne.

Wake, soul of mine, and cease not to aspire;
Fill up thy night with light of heavenly fire;
Seek comradeship amongst the souls up higher.

Reach hands to angels of the upper sphere;
Draw near to things divine and yet more near,
Till perfect love has cast out ev'ry fear,

Until thy World is filled with holy powers,
And Nature gives thee ages for thy hours,
And God shall say to thee of all things — OURS.

ON MEETING A BLIND MAN IN THE STREET

I met him on a quiet street
Where he and I were all alone;
And rhythmic with his patient feet
His stick kept tapping on the stone.

I stopped and watched him on his way,
I watched his stumbles and his slips,
And something seemed to bid me pray,
And something froze it on my lips.

He knew the darkness that had been
Before God said: "Let there be light;"
While I the shining world had seen,
And all the splendor of the night.

He had the look of one that prays;
His face was old with more than years;
His solemn, sphinx-like, sightless gaze
Seemed seeing things too sad for tears.

He almost touched me as he went;
He could have laid his hand in mine;
Yet all the lighted firmament,
And all the plan of things divine,

Came whisp'ring to me: "You can see
And he will never see again,"
And stretched between us — him and me —
A void too vast for my amen.

What word had I who owned the day
For him whose loss I'd never known?
He asked not me to point the way,
He only asked the paving stone.

And yet a cheer was in his face,
A child-like trust it almost seemed,
The subtle, strange, unconscious grace
Of one who sweetly slept and dreamed.

And so he went adown the street
A blind man walking all alone,
And, with a steady rhythmic beat,
His stick kept tapping on the stone.

L O C

THE QUESTION

Look up and down this weary earth
And mark that agéd working man,
Whose only joy is clownish mirth,
Whose only law — to take who can.

God gave him health and grace and might,
A supple form, a noble brow,
And in the simple faith of right
He set his strong hand to the plow.

And so for sixty years he wrought
In Summer's shine and Winter's snow,
And held his very soul for naught,
And watched a hoard of dollars grow.

He never looked to see a flower ;
He breathed no glory from the skies ;
The rainbow with the sun and shower,
Ne'er shone resplendent for his eyes.

His only thought was age's need,
His only battles, with the clods,
His only inspiration, greed,
And honesty and toil his gods.

Behold him now his work is done,
And he the product of his years ;
For all his labours — one by one —
Have turned to jest his sweat and tears.

The oak tree when it comes to die
Still bravely speaks of Nature's plan;
Before her throne I stand and cry:
"What mean ye by this finished man?"

This man whose sixty years of life
Deny all prophecies of youth;
Who never shirked the honest strife,
Nor deemed himself untrue to truth.

He came in beauty and in grace,
The richest fruitage of all time,
With something godlike in his face,
And all his promises sublime.

And now he goes a tottering slave
Nor wonders why his life began,
Write on a headstone for his grave;
"He lived and died an honest man."

Look up and down this weary earth,
And tell me, if you truly can,
If Nature ever brought to birth
One sadder than this working man.

TO A POETESS AT EIGHTY YEARS

O heart of mine rejoice, rejoice,
And hope dry up thy tears,
For lo, a loving living voice
That sings at eighty years.

She knows the sorrows that appall,
The miseries and fears;
God bless the heart that through it all
Still sings at eighty years.

The glory of the world she sees,
Its harmony she hears;
She looks and listens — on her knees,
And sings at eighty years.

Sing then the songs of eighty years,
For love is ever young,
And life is more than yet appears
Or songs would ne'er be sung.

So strike for love and life thy lyre;
What thou receivest, give,
And sing with all the heavenly choir;
To love is but to live.

A CHRISTMAS GREETING TO MY WIFE

Give me thy love.— It is enough
E'en on this natal day of Christ
That thou in me and I in thee
Have found the strength that hath sufficed.

Amidst a world that little cares
What joys or sorrows may betide,
Be thou for me and I for thee,
I still the bridegroom, thou the bride.

As hand in hand and heart to heart,
Though age may touch our heads with snow,
Nor wrinkled face nor tottering step
Shall dim or darken love's sweet glow,

Together up the heavenly steeps
To visions fair our hopes fore-tell,
I seeing through thine eyes and mine,
And thou through thine and mine as well.

What raptures can the heavens contain
That death or hell can take away,
When I have mine in thy true heart
And thou hast thine in mine away?

What could I bring and give to thee
That wouldst not savour of the earth?
Nor flashing gem nor jewel rare
Could mark the measure of thy worth.

What couldst thou bring and give to me
Wrought by thy hand or bought with pelf,
When I have ever as mine own
Love's fullest gift — thy own dear self?

So let us live, so let us die,
So let us join th' eternal throng,
That all the music of our life
Shall blend at once in heaven's song.

TO MY PIPE

They tell me Death sits in thy bowl,
 O my pipe;
With power to soothe and damn my soul,
 O my pipe;
'Tis wondrous what the devil owns
Beyond his realm of aches and groans
And vanities that grace bemoans,
 O my pipe.

I feel within the gentle thrill,
 O my pipe;
Of perfect peace and all good will,
 O my pipe:
The doctors say 'twill make me ill,
The preachers say my soul 'twill kill,
But all my nature loves thee still,
 O my pipe.

Come, give me one more draw at thee,
 O my pipe;
Till in thy foamy clouds I see,
 O my pipe;
Fair dreams of things that stir my heart:—
The songs of peace, the hopes of art;
O thou and I can never part,
 O my pipe.

OUR BUNGALOW

Where Ocean's tides swing to and fro ;
Where all its balmy breezes blow ;
And where the flowers and grasses grow ;
 Just there, you see
Our humble little bungalow
 Rise modestly.

Before it lies the sandy plain,
And round it rolls the mighty main,
Thun'dring for aye its slow refrain
 Of music grand ;
The solemn planetary strain
 Of sea and land.

No battlements nor lordly towers,
Fit emblems of wealth's prideful powers,
In gloomy splendor fiercely lowers
 Above its roof ;
But all the stormy winds and showers
 It keeps aloof.

And all the glory of the day
Falls freely round its walls of gray ;
And here the children come to play
 With new delights,
While Nature's warblers sing their lay
 Like Freedom's sprites.

When from behind the clouds at night
The hurrying moon hastes in her flight,
She marks a flaming path of light
 The waters o'er,
And tips each crested wave with white
 Along our shore.

And from that lowly cottage door
Th' expanding soul finds room to soar,
Up from the earth to heaven's floor
 'Tis all our own;
When hearts are kingly, who wants more?
 We have a throne.

Now peace be on thy humbleness;
Here may content ne'er find distress;
Here friends find warmer friendliness
 Than e'er before;
Till even strangers stop to bless
 Thy open door.

UNFINISHED FRAGMENT

The hills and the valleys follow
Like the waves of a coming sea,
And through the rift of the clouds that drift
The sun shines gloriously.

The corn and the wheat are standing
In green and gold array,
And the waving grass in the winds that pass
Is blue as the deeps of day.

The oaks and the elms are waving
As their leaves beat up and down,
And they softly sing of the passing spring
And the Autumn's royal brown.

Beyond the mellow distance
The black horizon lies;
Like an iron girth it belts the earth
And rims the hollow skies.

NOTE:— Written the evening before he was stricken.

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